



REFLECTIONS

2011



FRANCESCA LONGO ★ grade 11

REFLECTIONS

is the annual magazine of literature and art of the Berkeley Carroll Upper School. Students meet weekly to discuss the magazine's high standards, the soliciting of submissions, and their own writing in progress. In February, the editors chair small groups who read and critique anonymous submissions. After the preliminary critiques, the editors choose and edit the final selections and lay out the magazine. The striking artwork and writing in this magazine were all crafted by Berkeley Carroll Upper School students, occasionally to fulfill class assignments but always from the engines of their own creativity.

This year has really been a fruitful and exciting learning experience. All those who worked on the magazine put their hearts and souls into this process—sometimes struggling to agree, and other times embracing a unified vision. The result was one of intense collaboration and synthesis, where each person contributed his or her own individual mark. The transformation from manuscripts handed across classroom tables to the final polished magazine is a credit to our skilled design team, Bob Lane at Studio Lane, Inc., and Jodie Corngold, Director of Communications, and to our two knowledgeable advisors, Mr. Chu and Ms. Drezner. Thanks to everyone in the school who submitted and special congratulations to our two Summer Contest winners. Finally, I would like to thank our creative staff who all helped so much to turn a group process into an artistic and literary reality.

LILY LOPATE, Editor in Chief
Spring, 2011

REFLECTIONS

2011

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EMILY STERN ★ grade 11

Poetry

THE DESERT IN TUCSON, Eve Comperiat, grade 11	4
TEABAG MIDNIGHT PRESCRIPTIONS, Lily Lopate, grade 11	8
JUDGMENT, August Rosenthal, grade 10	10
CITY SCAPE, Mikaela Chant, grade 10.....	16
WHY DO I MANDATE MY OWN DISCONTENT?, Yanai Feldman, grade 9.....	18
THE SCARIEST THING ABOUT MISSING SOMEONE, Rebecca Glanzer, grade 11	26
DEMIOURGIA, Sophia Washburn, grade 11	33
ONE-LEGGED TIGHTROPE WALKER, Nina Austin, grade 10	43
SKI LIFT, Elise Guarna, grade 10	44
FORSAKEN BY TIME, Thomas Cooper Lippert, grade 9	47
★ NONNO , Nicole Barth, grade 12	54
<i>Summer Writing Contest Winner</i>	

Prose

METAPHYSICAL INFLUENCE, Allie Korbey, grade 10	7
JUPITER, Naomi Brenman, grade 12	13
'HANSEL AND GRETEL' According to the Duck, Zeke Bardash, grade 12	21
ONE AND THE SAME, Sophia Timko, grade 10	25
HOW DO YOU PAINT INTERPRETATION IN WORDS?, Olivia Scott, grade 10.....	28
VELCRO SNEAKERS, Olivia Cucinotta, grade 9	30
A BIT FARTHER SOUTH, Joseph Waldman, grade 11	36
BASILICA RESURRECTION, Melina Montesino, grade 12	39
OUR WESTERN COUNTERPARTS, Henry Schwab, grade 12.....	51

Art

PHOTO (Cover), Emily Stern, grade 11	
SEWN DRESS (Inside Cover), Francesca Longo, grade 11	
PHOTO, Sage Lancaster, grade 12	5
PHOTO, Francesca Longo, grade 11	6
★ PHOTO, Emily Stern, grade 11	9
<i>Summer Art Contest Winner</i>	
PHOTO, Eve Comperiat, grade 11	11
PHOTO, Elise Guarna, grade 10	12
PHOTO, Anya Katz, grade 10	15
PHOTO, Zachary Fisher, grade 9	17
DRAWING, Charlotte Fox, grade 11	19
CERAMIC, Sarah Beranbaum, grade 10	20
PAINTING, Drew Stazesky, grade 11	23
PHOTO, Sage Lancaster, grade 12	24
PAINTING, Emily Southwick, grade 11	27
PHOTO, Sophia Washburn, grade 11	29
PHOTO, Sage Lancaster, grade 12	32
CERAMIC, Hannah Doban, grade 11	35
DRAWING, Ethan Marcopoulos, grade 9	38
DRAWING, Charlotte Pierce, grade 9	42
PAINTING, Charlotte Fox, grade 11	45
PHOTO, Anya Katz, grade 10	46
COLLAGE, Olivia Scott, grade 10	49
PAINTING, Hannah Lemkowitz, grade 12	50
PRESSED FLOWERS (Inside Back Cover), Francesca Longo, grade 11	

The Desert in Tucson

(after “The Hyacinth Garden in Brooklyn” by Hayden Carruth)

EVE COMPERIATI ★ grade 11

Recently an enemy
 pushed me
 down a hole
 in Tucson. I
 know exactly where it
 is, I could always
 find it on my own.
 And as I fell
 closing my eyes to
 the fire, a strange
 sense departed from me,
 prickly and dry,
 of a cactus
 desert set
 on the dry land
 far from suburban
 mansions, a small
 desert with tumbleweeds
 of the same size and color,
 and the unknown
 feeling left the air.
 It escaped me,

freed me, as I fell
 past the sand looking
 up. There clearly
 among the fire
 I saw the demon,
 the horrible American
 man detested by mankind,
 standing there, thriving,
 the white body already
 glowing, freezing amidst the fire,
 healing in Tucson, in
 Hell, lifted
 by the sins of the simple-minded humans,
 an American man
 chosen for greed, for hate,
 for life, immorality
 in the fire
 in the hole
 somewhere in Tucson,
 in Hell.



SAGE LANCASTER ★ grade 12



FRANCESCA LONGO ★ grade 11

Metaphysical Influence

ALLIE KORBey ★ grade 10

Between the stripes on her white shirt there is a story. She was lost, but ran away. That is the muddy part. That is why it is ripped. Why she doesn't like to talk about what happened to the left sleeve with the red stain. It was just a game, she reassures you. The fringes at the bottom show lost length. Hidden majestic integrity. Made to adapt to new ages it grows with her. Saucy in its nature she implies. She tells you the memories and you nod. The pocket is just left with seams. An ink splotch shaped like a foot or an avocado. It's like the clouds she says. It slips under beds, into parties, dirty bathrooms, never clean. Wiped with fables it slides easily onto her slim body. Of course it fits. Everything falling into place as promised. It will always work for her. You try it on and it folds. Disappointed you know that it doesn't look good. No use lying to yourself. You choose to keep the innocence. Letting it slip to its rightful place on the floor, you give up the fact that her stories didn't fit you that well anyway.

Teabag Midnight Prescriptions

LILY LOPATE ★ grade 11

Our medicine cabinet had the cleanest dust-free counter tops
out of all bathroom-sink installations. I used to dream.

I'd dream for the late afternoons that I always love
and sometimes dread, filled with the teakettle of my quiet
company that I'll never always miss. Sometimes our fists
would sweat and we'd fight. I'm not crazy to you
but delirious by you, not delirious to you just crazy by you.

Did I ever tell you about the time....?

I can't remember now. Well,
he was the worm of his book, the leather of
his gang, the liquor flask he gulped to get by or kiss or walk away,
the smell of his ears, the brisk days of Fall; my boyfriend,
a fast paced thriller and comic lover.

But that was way back when. Back to yesteryear.

At last, when stars turn opal violet blue, the moon starts its
rotation above

the grass & they just can tell—lust, lust, lust.

I later turned into a celestial quest. Tea bags,
washcloths, yoga mats are boring. Sometimes my dog looks at me
like he knows... I installed 727 alarm clocks
yesterday. Pink post-its and yellow note cards in the refrigerator,
laminated the adhesive tags on our prescription drugs
and threw out my damn aqua toothbrush. And now,
our medicine cabinet sink is the dirtiest filthiest compartment I ever saw.



EMILY STERN ★ grade 11

★ SUMMER ART CONTEST WINNER

Judgment

AUGUST ROSENTHAL ★ grade 10

Pick up and float
down the Styx
No need for a boat, just float

The Riverman asks for his coins
the sickening reminder of life
of human destruction
of microwave ovens
and smut
and smog
and ash
choke
and wait for haggard shafts of sunlight
to pour over
But this single moment of brilliance
never comes

Stunned. by the hatred
by the proclamations of hope
from those that will never help
Close the door. Shut out the
dim present.

Let the future take you
strangle you
and burn you
and ravage your body
eyes closed

There goes control
There goes pain
There goes happiness
Just float.



EVE COMPERIATI ★ grade 11



ELISE GUARNA ★ Grade 10

Jupiter

NAOMI BRENMAN ★ grade 12

Just beyond the asteroid belt, Jupiter spins slowly, surrounded by faint rings. Jupiter's atmosphere is the largest in the solar system. Jupiter's atmosphere presses down against the planet with ten times as much force as the earth's atmosphere. Jupiter's atmosphere is thick, cloudy and characterized by violent storms and winds. One storm is so strong that it forms a red spot larger than earth, a spot that has been spinning counterclockwise for at least 200 years.

Jupiter is a gas giant, comprising mainly hydrogen and helium, with only a cold, rocky core at the center. Jupiter's mass is 2.5 times as large as the mass of all the other planets combined. And yet, even with all its mass, no one inhabits its icy core.

Sixty three moons rotate around the gas giant, trapped by its overwhelming mass. Out of the 63 only four, the Galilean moons, are visible with a telescope: Io, Europa, Ganymede, and Callisto. Europa's surface is barren ice, streaked and cracked. And yet its lonely surface is covered by oxygen. The liquid water that lies hidden below the ice holds potential for life. Potential for companionship in this tiny solar system of ours. Potential that we are not alone.

Unlike Jupiter, Mercury is so small it cannot hold on to gasses long enough for them to form an atmosphere. Solar winds blow hydrogen and helium to the tiny planet where they quickly escape back into space. There is no ozone layer, no protection. One day the sun will grow with age and engulf Mercury in flames. The ice caps will evaporate before they get a chance to melt into liquid. No one will notice.

From outer space the third planet from the sun is blue and green with swirls of white clouds. Unlike the clouds of its neighbors, Earth's clouds are made from water vapor, which occasionally falls in droplets from the sky. Earth is the only planet to have

trees, civilization, love, desire, heartbreak. Below the surface pools of orange magma swirl, shifting the size and shapes of the mountains, valleys, and oceans.

Even in the deepest depths of a volcano, the Earth is filled with life. Microscopic archea are extremophiles: single cells with no brains, no consciousness, no feelings.

Atmospheres are composed of carbon dioxide, phosphorus, sulfur, nitrogen, hydrogen, or helium. The word comes from the Greek word *atmos* meaning air, and the word *sphaira* meaning sphere. An invisible sphere of air surrounds us. It produces weather—clouds, rain, storms, wind—strong enough to alter the geography of a planet. It is held down by gravity, and in turn puts pressure on the solid core beneath it. Most times we look up at a clear blue sky and don't realize that the atmosphere is refracting every bit of light we see.

Each breath of life begins with a contraction of the diaphragm. The steady inhale and exhale keep us alive, but as we breathe life rushes by. We can fill our heads with information and facts; we can memorize elements, molecules, body systems; we can understand the physicality of the solar system. But we still can't figure out what life is all about. You can sneak out of the house late at night and wander across the street to the beach to feel the cold sand in between your toes as you stare out at the black ocean, which blends into a black sky dotted with an infinite number of stars that you try to arrange into pictures, stories, myths, meaning. And then you remember the bright sun beating against your back as you pedal your bike down the sandy street, the gentle feeling of clasped hands, the warmth of your own bed, the sound of sizzling chicken as your father and sister cook dinner, the tears that form in the corners of your eyes and roll down your cheeks as your face pulls into a smile and you gasp for breath.



ANYA KATZ ★ grade 10

CITY SCAPE

MIKAELA CHANT ★ grade 10

Close to the edge,
She bathes in the beauty of traffic
And construction, a chaser after taxis and
Honeycombed subway cars.
She loves the thrill of touching the trucks and vans going past her.
Knowing that they could take her along with them,
She wants so badly to follow them,
To lie underneath
Streets studded with chewing gum and garbage bags,
All matted on the ground
Like wet hair sticking to a scalp.
She feels that if she lets the city take her over,
Then maybe the electrical wires and steel streetlamps and skyscrapers
Will accept her.
The wind whips her hair
Flapping itself like a white flag
Against the rhythms and motions of city steel.



ZACHARY FISHER ★ grade 9

Why Do I Mandate My Own Discontent?

YANAI FELDMAN ★ grade 9

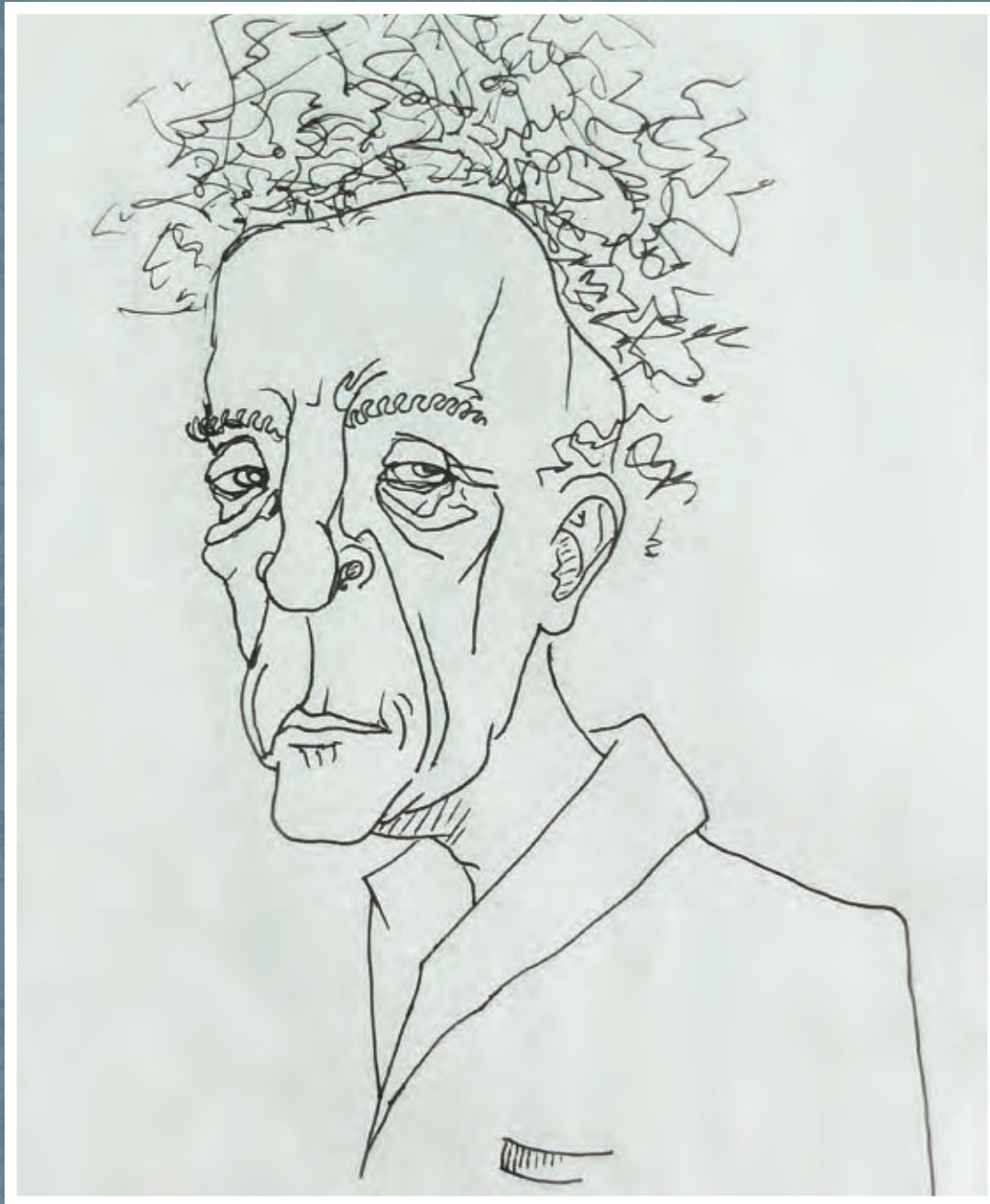
Why do I mandate my own discontent?
It seems as if my fated course
Leads to a blighted
State of misery.
It's unavoidable.

My candid countenance,
Straining
Its muscles to leave its dreary cave
In the reticent orifices of this
Organ of mine
That pumps sterile crimson fluid
Throughout my body,
Is restrained
By my egregious fear of failure and rejection.

Why must these non-unique
Sentiments
Inhabit my stressed brain?
If they were exclusive to me
I might have the pleasure
Of difference
And a sensation
Of deference.

However, they inhabit
The minds of all;
It's all a matter of how far its prongs
Stem through the brain,
The extent of which
Deems its host forever
Doomed to his own frigid sanctuary.

I hide
Behind the inexorable façade
Of my self-imposed self-righteousness,
Which has both contributed to the
Atrophy of my irresolute
But embryonic core
And has sustained my
False happiness
To the extent that I've intermittently seemed
to achieve it.



CHARLOTTE FOX ★
grade 11



SARAH BERANBAUM ★
grade 10

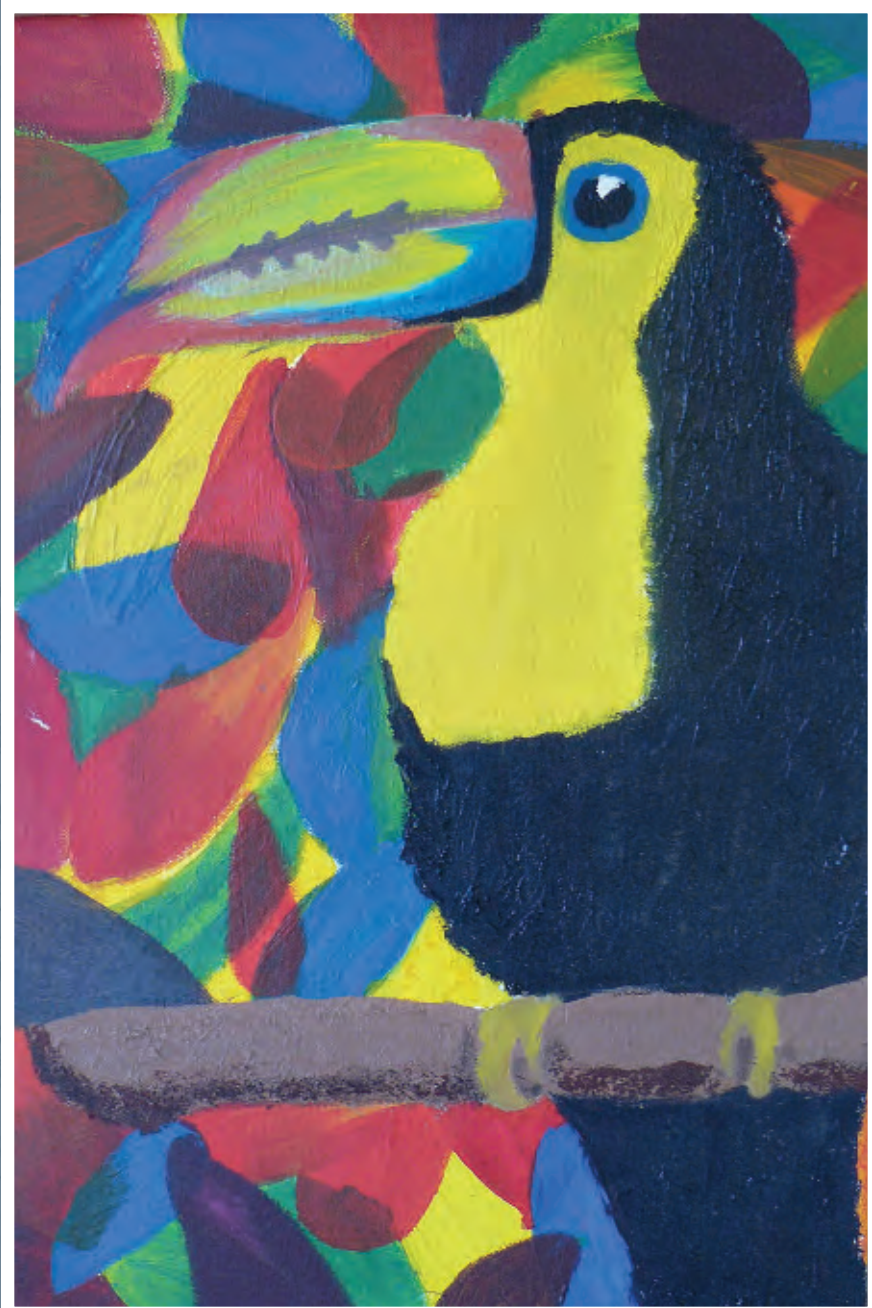
"Hansel and Gretel" According to the Duck

ZEKE BARDASH ★ grade 12

So there's this one day yeah?! I'm swimmin' around in my little pond you know? Doin' what I do! I remember it was a especially bad day because I ate a funny fish, you know, one I don't really eat normallies. And this funny fish was makin' my agita act up. So I take a Tums. Who says ducks can't take Tums? So's I'm goin' on about my agita when all's of a sudden, this quackin' fugats bastard Vinny the squirrel runs his little donk up to the bank of my pond and starts his little mouth about, "Hey, Joey! You seen dem two human youts walkin' around dis here woods?" Then he starts yappin' his little trap about how Yogi, the big black bear of the forest, is talkin' about how he's goin' to whack these two particular juveniles so's he can catch a decent meal before the winter season. But me and dis here bear go way back, and trust me, he's just your average bear. I know's that Yogi ain't goin' to whack nothin' cause he's a big baby who just talks big to excite some of the small-minded girlies durin' the next matin' season. So I tells Vinny the squirrel, I says, "Go get your scrawny little donk back up a tree, and take ol' Winnie the Pooh whichoo" (ooh Pooh, Whichoo, that's like a rhyme or sumtin). But then I realize. Hey, I'm just a duck, and Yogi, he's a bear even if he ain't no special type of bear. And what's a quackin' duck with agita goin' to do agains a bear who got himself a attitude problem on account of the fact that he ain't had a good meal in a while. Plus I called him a Winnie the Pooh, and around my pond them's fightin' words. So's I start to worryin' about ol' Yogi, and you know this starts my agita up all over again. So's I'm thinkin' I gots to get me some of that Pepto cause clearly these Tums ain't workin' out. So here I is tryin' to remember which rock I hid my Pepto under, and you need to hide it cause how often is you to find Pepto in the forest, when these two youts that Vinny been gabbin'

about come to the pond only they's on the other side of the pond tryin' to get across to the other side. And here I is thinkin', Oh damn! These kids is goin' to swim across my pond and run into a giant quackin' bear what just got his ass handed to him verbally by a quackin' duck with agita. So's I'm tryin' to tell them to turn around but of course the folks at Disney can't seem to make a coherent duck like the good people over at Warner Brothers who made Daffy Duck.

So I'm squibblin' and squabblin', and the fat kid gets it in his head that he can just get on my back like I'm some kind of animal and ride me to the other side of the pond like I'm paid by the county to carry people. And then when I gets to the other side he expects me to turn round and pick up the other kid. Now I did it, but I ain't liked it. In my day a kid'd get slapped around for treatin' people like this. Eh but the world's a different place you know? These kids don't know nothin' about respect. So's I go back lookin' for my Pepto cause now my agita's real bad, and I find that goombah Vinny runnin' off with my stash. So what do I got. I'm just some quackin' duck with agita livin' in some enchanted pond carryin' little kids across. Some life.



DREW STAZESKY ★ grade 11



SAGE LANCASTER ★ grade 12

One And The Same

SOPHIA TIMKO ★ grade 10

The jolt, as the doors fly open, “gracias, gracias, more money?” The sweet distant music, the humming traffic, screeching violins. Theatrical, beautiful, dirty. Covered by the dirt beneath the fingernails and blackened gum, beauty is beheld. The immense charm of thousands. Defiled billboards of moustached celebrities and eyeless males. Millions of dirty feet after a hard day, trampling the other tracks. Beggars, vendors, managers, ticketers alike. All on their own walks of life, own tracks, own directions. Uptown, downtown, east side, west side. Insignificant stories to the whole, but each gracefully embraced. Conversing in many languages. Unified when they meet for a mere fraction of a second in their lives, as their paths cross to unknown tracks. Rushing to catch it before it’s too late, before their paths stray and continue on their separate ways.

The Scariest Thing About Missing Someone

REBECCA GLANZER ★ grade 11

isn't the fear that you'll never see him again.
Far scarier is that one day,
you're not going to miss him.
One day you'll sit up in bed,
and the first thing that comes to mind
won't be his painful smile
or the way his hand fit perfectly into yours.
Rather, you'll think of the dishes you forgot
to wash last night, or that cocktail
party conversation the night before.
You'll stop missing him
not because he came back,
but because the human heart can only weep
for so long.
Eventually the throb turns from emotion
to habit, and once we realize we only hurt
because we hurt yesterday and the day before,
once the heart runs out of heartfelt tears,
we can't even remember what it was we were
missing all that time,
and all of a sudden,
we just don't miss, not at all.



EMILY SOUTHWICK ★ grade 11

How Do You Paint Interpretation in Words?

OLIVIA SCOTT ★ grade 10

She knelt down stroking the soil. Her hands dirty, but rich from age. Her gown, a concentrated cream hue, fell to the earth. The ground was spoiling her clothing. Her protection. She was not an animal. She had gotten farther than that. Her family had gotten farther than that. People have gotten farther than that. They have grown. They have evolved.

She could suddenly see. Her hair was being pulled from her skull gently. It was being removed from her face. Stretching back, farther from her. Her clothing, loose fitting normally, suddenly was outlining her body. The fabric was shaping to her hips and revealing the rolling hills behind her. It was floating behind her like some unrealistic force. She had felt it before. People had harnessed this force. They had taken advantage of its power and its strength.

She was heated. Outside her skin recovered from the horror of winter. It danced in front of her: Her savoir. Glowing in pride. Darkness was pushed out, her bitter enemy. She had made her hero. Her hands and muscles collected the pieces, and together they bore survival. They bore communication, and warmth. Scared others away, but kept her safe. Kept people safe.

She fell, but was caught. Was netted down to safety. It covered her and filled her. Her hair flew back as she pushed herself through. Through the cushion feeling, she threw the dream of rain aside. Light called to her from above, but the new feeling and surroundings kept her away. She knew she could not stay forever, but it held her lightly. She was comfortable in its arms, yet she could push away whenever necessary. She had freedom, and she needed that. It was the freedom people needed.



SOPHIA WASHBURN ★ grade 11

Velcro Sneakers

OLIVIA CUCINOTTA ★ grade 9

I strutted into school one day, just like any other. I was wearing my favorite t-shirt; it was a green square-cut shirt with an Aztec sort of pattern on it. I'd paired it with a brand new pair of saggy jeans. My tangled hair was pulled back into a messy ponytail. It reached the small of my back because I refused to let anyone cut it.

I sat down next to my friend, Sara, another self-proclaimed tomboy.

"Oh, hey," she said as I sat down. "Do you remember my hamster?"

"Bean!" I yelled, a little too loudly. A few heads turned. I ignored them.

"I got her a new cage. It's really cool, like two stories and everything."

We discussed her new cage until the end of homeroom and then we all headed to our next classes, still chatting amongst ourselves.

A few classes later it was lunchtime. I sat down at the table I always sat at, the big one in the back. Soon our table was full with all my friends. Eli sat down next to me and looked at my new pants.

"So you're wearing boys *pants* now, too?" he said, gesturing to my brand new jeans.

"Yeah, what's with you wearing boys clothes all the time?" chimed in another boy.

My face fell as they continued with this line of questioning. I had no answers for them, so I sat in silence.

For the rest of the day I studied the other girls in my class. They wore flip flops and pink shirts with cartoon animals and sassy phrases like, "Admit it, you love me." They also wore jeans with jewels on the back pockets. I looked at my t-shirt, baggy boys jeans and dirty Velcro sneakers. I sat in the back of the classroom and for the first time in my life, I didn't raise my hand when I had something to say, I just kept my head down and did my work.

The next day I came into school wearing the only pink shirt I had. It had a 1960's style hippie van on it, with suitcases falling off the roof and the caption, "Too Much!" This was the closest I could come to a cute cartoon animal saying something

provocative. I also wore a pair of blue jeans that were less baggy, and I drew dots on them with magic marker to make it look like they had those little plastic stones that everyone else's had. I didn't have any other shoes, though.

For the rest of the day I kept my head down as I walked through the halls, and I sat in the back of all my classes. I was secretly hoping someone would ask me what was wrong, but no one did.

I walked into math class and sat in the back. From this vantage point I had a clear view of everything that was going on in front of me. I saw giggling girls, passing notes back and forth, even though class hadn't started yet, and we were still allowed to talk. I'd seen girls do this on TV too, so I tore a corner off of my notebook paper and wrote, "Hey, what's up?" I paused for a moment, and then added a heart. That seemed appropriate, like something the other girls were probably writing. I looked around for someone to pass it to. I saw my friend Sara, who was focused very hard on doodling little Pac-man monsters with teeth all over her paper.

I handed the note to her, she read it and shot me a confused look. I felt my ears turning hot and red. What was I thinking? I couldn't pull off passing notes like that, only the girls on TV or the other, more popular girls in my class could. I wasn't like them.

For the remainder of the class, and for every other class that day, I just sat there. I didn't shoot my hand up when I had something to say. I didn't run around in the playground at yard. I just sat in the back of the class, melted into my seat and put my bag in front of my feet so no one would see my scuffed up, used to be white, tearing in some places, Velcro sneakers.



SAGE LANCASTER ★ grade 12

Demiourgia

SOPHIA WASHBURN ★ grade 11

Backyard Virginia, butterflies swarming, the baby
turns one. Seated by the pool on lawn chairs, the water
reflects their conversation, chlorine-full
pool brimming with the murmur, crescent
excitement for a new life, they speak
with anticipation, watch the second belly swelling.

He always preferred the ocean's mighty swelling,
now loved watching the girl take baby
steps, saw her meet the ocean, and hoped it would speak
to her too, hoped she would love the water,
her father's daughter. Watched her crescent
love and hoped it would be full.

The apartment soon grew full.
He could witness his family swelling
through the small peek of window could barely take in the crescent
moon. Called another woman baby
and turned as six brown eyes leaked water,
daring him to speak.

Dirty Williamsburg summer, he spoke
to her, a distant voice on the phone, full
of hesitant updates on the sisters, across waters.
A bee kissed the smallest on her tiny lips, they were swelling.
She cried just like a baby,
her big sister cut in, half-child voice crescent.

Years later, he is guided to sleep, the moon a crescent.
His girl climbs, stealthy, wishing she could speak
the tongue he knows so well. Sneaks down stones, baby
cheeks shed, lethal full
new hips, heart, legs, chest swelling
heads for the ocean she has always preferred, dangerous waters.

Close now to the water,
the girl is nothing like his new phase, mouth turned up, a crescent.
He envies her liberation, young life swelling,
no mortgage no job no ties to speak
of. Remembers the time when he was not so full
of guilt, responsibility, claustrophobia. Remembers Virginia, when she was just a baby.

The baby's cry reverberates, punctures her, as she waters
the vines, watches them grow full, snaking up to the sky's white crescent
and she knows that she speaks the beginning of the end, just another creation swelling.



HANNAH DOBAN ★ grade 11

A Bit Farther South

JOSEPH WALDMAN ★ grade 11

It was just before midnight when the fire began. The house belonged to Martha and Richard Sterling, a wealthy elderly couple, who were only days away from moving farther south to a country estate for retirement. They had lived in the house since the 1960s, when Richard made his fortune as an investment banker, but the neighborhood and its inhabitants had changed since then, so they decided to leave once and for all.

The blaze spread quickly over Martha's expensive antique rugs and up the cloth covering the table used to house her collection of porcelain cat miniatures. Her obese tabby Cynthia was the first to smell the smoke. Cynthia rarely did anything except for the time she killed and ate the pet gerbil belonging to the Madisons next door. But this time, she sprang to her feet and meowed loudly, waking Richard.

"Dear God almighty," he cried. He dove out of bed and rushed to the closet, to salvage what he could. His eyes caught the cover of a photo album. There in the center was his younger self, clad in all white, lighting the cross that burned so bright those many years ago. That part of his past was long gone, aside from a few racial epithets whispered when the Madisons two children ruined his lawn, which he was sure no one heard.

By this time, Martha was up and in panic. She tried to open the door but the knob burned her hand. She regretted having her windows nailed shut to stop intruders.

"Call the fire department!" she shrieked.

"They'll never get here in time," said Richard, still trying to maintain his composure.

"What about Mr. Madison?" said Martha with tears sliding down her face.

Richard shot an angry look at his wife as he slowly opened his mouth to speak.

"I thought we agreed—we don't get help from...." He paused. "Their kind."

"Look," Martha snapped, "I don't like them any more than you do, but do you have any better ideas?" Smoke began to fill their bedroom as Richard reluctantly dialed the number. He still remembered it from the time he tried to convince Mr. Madison that his kind was better suited living downtown. Richard coughed as he waited for his call to be answered. Mr. Madison's phone rang. He knew why Mr. Sterling was calling. He picked it up and listened patiently.

"Who was that?" Mrs. Madison asked after he had hung up the phone.

"It's just Mr. Sterling."

Mrs. Madison looked puzzled. "What did he want?"

Mr. Madison smiled. "He just wanted to say goodbye. He's about to move a bit farther south."



ETHAN MARCOPOULOS ★ grade 9

Basilica Resurrection

MELINA MONTESINO ★ grade 12

There I was on the floor. I awoke only to find a cup of sugar water in my hands. It took me a while to make sense of it. I had fought with God and lost.

I was spending the summer in the Dominican Republic with my family. My New York body had grown accustomed to wet air; now I wore new lungs of palm trees and mosquitoes. The majority of our visit was spent at my grandmother's house in the small village of Jima, Bonao, the home I wished I had. The land was free from cement hats. There were no restrictions to where the roots of weeds could show. Our neighbors, living in falling huts, performed their daily ritual of visitation with their critical manners. With a formal introduction, they would sit down, fold their hands, and cross their thin legs, but it was easy to see the need for money in their eyes.

After spending three weeks at my grandmother's house, my parents decided to spend some time sightseeing. The plan was to drive four hours to the city of Puerto Plata and visit La Basilica de Higüey, the most famous church in the entire island. I did not want to go to a church. I was certain God did not exist. I had no choice but to take a four-hour journey to sit down and pretend to pray. I arrived at noon and the sun was at its most provocative stage. I had no intention of going inside the ancient home of depressed people looking for a way out. But I had to.

I stood in front of La Basilica, looking over the holy grounds. The majority were European tourists with buttered hair and expensive cameras. The devotees were inside on their knees. My mother and I walked in, through doors large enough for the Big Friendly Giant I had read about in the stories. Our steps down the aisle

echoed though the cluster of human voices I was used to hearing at the beach. We walked until we reached the podium. There she was. The encased Virgin Mary made of clay. There was nothing interesting about her. I just wondered how people were waiting in line to kiss the dirty glass of her prison. I waited alongside my mother while she put her hand on the glass and prayed. She prayed, for me.

Religion has never convinced me. Jesus was just the celebrity of Jerusalem while the Bible was the ancient version of *Star Magazine*. God was just the personification of weather, making rainy days holy days. Catholic school did not help either; the more I learned about the corrupt history of Christianity the more I ignored it. So the shimmer of the Virgin Mary's eye and Jesus' life on the walls of the church could not save me from my skepticism. As my mother finished her prayer she took my hand and said, "Melina, at least touch the glass and pray just once." Annoyed, I replied, "Mah, you know I don't believe in this, or God," and walked away. I was ashamed I left her at the podium, but I thought it would be embarrassing to apologize. With a guilty smirk, I walked out of the church through the back doors.

It was like the end of a Broadway show back in New York where the ushers try to sell signed t-shirts and posters. The nuns were waiting outside in a small market filled with crystal rosaries and laminated bibles. I walked until I reached the car in the isolated parking lot. A nearby security guard noticed and asked me, "What's wrong?" I said I was waiting for my parents who had the keys. He smiled and asked where I was from. I told him about my shiny New York and sweet home in Jima, Bonao. To my surprise, he was from Jima as well. But I didn't quite get the next part. I was going deaf. His lips were moving but the

words were not there. The image of the officer was hugged by a black cloud effect. I was going down.



There I was on the floor, only to find the cup of sugar water in my hands. “What happened?” I asked. But it felt like I had asked the entire world the same question.

There were about two dozen people around me including the buttered hair tourists. The security guard was holding my back while I sat on the concrete floor. I had fainted. I had fainted? It was more like I had died for a few seconds, because I knew I had challenged Him. God was laughing at me. It was my first miracle.

I could only see past the crowd of human beings and look at the spirits. I tried to remember the black cloud. I knew my cable had been briefly disconnected from the universal lifeline. It was beautiful. I couldn’t distinguish whether I was scared or grateful. It was something grander than any upside-down stomach on a rollercoaster.

God must be funny looking because I hadn’t quite made out His face in the black cloud. After our short encounter, I was back on real terms. It was my first time to feel faith. Still, the others pulling my fleshy body off the floor thought I needed a doctor. The clinic was just across the street. I was checked in and examined. My body must have been on autopilot since I only remember hearing the proof: blood sugar normal, blood pressure normal; everything else perfect.



CHARLOTTE PIERCE ★
grade 9

One-Legged Tightrope Walker

NINA AUSTIN ★ grade 10

They all cheer for the one-legged tightrope walker
Her fumbles are amusing
Her struggles stir laughter
She is so clumsy
Straining in vain to find balance

We all jeer at the one-legged tightrope walker
She trips
Her eyes are wide
Anticipating a fall
We smile broadly from the security of our seats

They all leer at me in disgust
as I pace across
They watch as the muscles in my thigh clench to support me
I look down at the trampoline
An unspoken truth
And can already feel the wind on my cheek
Slave like everything else
to gravity

Ski Lift

ELISE GUARNA ★ grade 10

Snowboard couple

Too cool, too cool.

No helmet, no safety bar

Eyes roll, lips purse

He leans in for a kiss

Her goggles bounce off

his forehead

Blonde hair

The kind from a bottle that might look natural

If it wasn't so yellow.

She skis to pass the time

as the ink dries on

husband number three.

Lady in blue, talks of

kids and pizza wedges

in her kind voice and

Irish accent

while icicles form on

her moustache.

Old man. Not so old, but
old enough.

Lift operator, 30 years.

30 years.

Lives in a trailer, Mom's

in a home. Never

enough money.

The slopes are his house,

his life,

30 years.

The snow drifts down.



CHARLOTTE FOX ★
grade 11



ANYA KATZ ★ grade 10

Forsaken By Time

THOMAS COOPER LIPPERT ★ grade 9

It will be sad when I die, for all of you.
I know it, for when the bonds of the heart become threadbare and ripped
one cannot but be mournful.
However when you sit around the table, with everyone gathered,
and wonder what to do with me, I beg of you do not bury me.
Do not put me in the ground,
for even if I have become prey to Time,
I dread to become carrion.

And please, if it is possible, do not burn me.
For while I will be safe from the fears of the grave
I will, undoubtably, be at the mercy of your idle thoughts.
I know there is already a spot behind some old photos,
where I would be shelved in a neat box,
unremembered.

Even if, perchance, you let me scatter over the world,
I would not like that.
For I've never liked the wind,
and I would like it even less to have myself at its whim.
To go wherever it took me would be its pleasure, not mine.

So instead, take me to my childhood.
Find that secluded grove we used to play in,
the one where you scratched your arm,
the one where I fell for you,

find that place, or any other.
And sit me up against a tree, to be one with nature.
Let the moss climb up my legs,
let flowers bloom from my hands,
and let the world and I become one.
And when cruel Decay comes to collect,
I will welcome him into my heart.
For he will become a frequent visitor to that grove,

like so many others I have been forsaken by Time,
the host of Decay,
and the victim of your Neglect.
Yes, surely, it will be sad when I die, for all of you.



OLIVIA SCOTT ★ grade 10



HANNAH LEMKOWITZ ★
grade 12

Our Western Counterparts

HENRY SCHWAB ★ grade 12

Most people know us as “The Schwabs,” but in the strange world of our extended family, we don’t get full ownership of the name. Here we take on the title “The Eastern Schwabs.” Almost the entire family lives in New York, so it would really make the most sense for us to be “The Schwabs,” and *they* could be The Western Schwabs.

Either way, the Western Schwabs came first. Emily, Elizabeth and Taylor have been, of course, superior from the womb, into their adult lives, as they are Stuart’s children. Dad says all three of them made Honor Roll. Elizabeth is going on a service trip to Spain! Taylor’s soccer team placed first in the league. They have the best manners and are *very* musically talented and friendly.

A 2001 disposable camera recorded one of the few times all seven cousins from all three siblings were together. Since then I’ve found the collection of pictures, none of which were framed or put into albums, and I’ve kept a few favorites. In number one, I hug Emily, Ethan hugs Stuart, and my Dad hugs Elizabeth in our driveway right as they exit the taxi. How was the flight? *Fine*. Did you sit next to anyone nice or awful? *No, just my mom*. Well, are you excited for the week? *Yeah, I guess so*. Anything you want to do in particular? *Not really*.

So that night I said Mom, I don’t know how to talk to them. They never have anything to say to me, it’s boring. And she said I was wrong and they were really nice and interesting so I must have been doing something wrong or making them uncomfortable. Or maybe they were tired. Yeah, they must’ve been tired. I figured I’d try harder, because they must have just been shy, or tired, or nervous maybe.

Number seven: Ethan and Emily sit at the breakfast table next to a giant box of Crunch Berries. Minutes after the snapshot, Emily felt the need to share that lab rats died when fed *only* Cap'n Crunch. And, of course, this pleasant comment foiled Ethan's plan to consume only Cap'n Crunch for weeks on end. Ethan asked Mom if it was true. She said probably, since after all, they were smart kids, and their dad was a chemistry major. For some reason, what was just an interesting fact to the 12-year-old was emotionally scarring to the Cap'n Crunch-loving five-year-old.

Number 12 is from the only day we spent in the city. All seven cousins are artfully arranged on the windowsill overlooking Central Park. That day all I wanted to do was go to FAO Schwarz, conveniently located six blocks away. But I would have settled for a walk around the block, maybe a museum, or even maybe a visit to a *jail* after spending eight hours watching SpongeBob and, of course, hearing about how my cousins never watch TV at home because it's bad for your brain.

And number 27, the last one, is still a favorite. The whole family, including grandparents, is lined up right before our last lunch. Lunch took place at the Club, of course, because even if we get an invitation from friends, we always just go to the Club. At the Club, you must know the difference between a classic sandwich and a ritz, or that the tennis courts are closed on Mondays but open on the first Monday of every month, and closed on the last Thursday of every month. And, of course, the Men's Bar is neither a bar nor is it exclusively for men, but if you *are* looking for a men's bar, head to the porch. It's suffocating, but our cousins never want to go anywhere else. Either way, it was

a picture-perfect day on the Sound. We looked happy together. There weren't even any whitecaps on the water, just sailboats.

After lunch they left to go back to the airport. I cried because I thought about how they could only come for one week per year, and we hadn't made the most of it. All we had done was gone into the city once and swam a few times; they hadn't even met any of our friends. At the same time I felt happy that I would have my room to myself again, but it made me even more sad that I was selfish when I should have been more than willing to share my room with my cousins. The next day I was still upset. But I worked on it; I planned their next visit. I knew exactly what to ask them and talk to them about so that I could finally learn firsthand how great they were.

Nonno

NICOLE BARTH, grade 12

★ SUMMER WRITING CONTEST WINNER

How do you expect the unexpected?
You and I both know the final page was coming.
The grandfather clock,
that timeless man in the corner,
has chimed for the last time.

But don't you cry for him.
His pale blue eyes had seen the skies
and known the love of *famiglia*,
he'd fought for years
and never let his one lung get the best of him.

She still remembers sitting at the dining
room table
on the patio outside,
the perfectly groomed grass
caressing the tiles around them,
on a late Friday night in summer

filled to the brim with Carla's lasagna
and endless melon with prosciutto,
mesmerized by his discussions on business
and the proper way to live.

Zoom the camera in
and you'll see
—in the corner—

that girl in the obsidian dress,
the river of mascara
following the cracks in her skin
as her mouth sews itself shut
by using the thread of grief.

Funny how women
have taken the little black dress
from place to place...

The timeless piece of clothing, they say
—like the grandfather clock—
but that girl's dress has yet to live.
It's seen the flickering candles and the
sugary frosting of sweet sixteen cakes,
but it's never tasted the salty tears of a funeral.
A dress has never been worn until it's seen it all.

Biting her chapped lip
to keep the remorse from
gushing onto the wooden
church's pews,
her eyes search for a distraction,
a momentary pause
from the distilled silence.

It doesn't matter that her shins are aching
because of her heels
which force her to survey
the morose catastrophe
from a greater distance

as she dries her eyes with her fists,
further smudging the ink
that has clearly written her emotions on her
face.

She will not
—she cannot—
bring herself to run her fingers
along the varnish of his maple box...

For that is what she tells herself.
Merely a box,
merely a resting place for something that is no
longer there.
Someone? That is no longer there....
But it's not just a box, to her.
And it's not just someone.

A shaky breath,
a chorus of sniffles.
She feels the air catch and rattle in her chest
as she sighs,
trying to alleviate the sinking
feeling that courses through her,
bringing her in an out of focus.

They whisper,
"Era un uomo incredibile,"
back to the feeling of nausea
that threatens to bubble over
within her.

She's shaking like a leaf
as the room moves in sluggish circles around her.
She can hardly breathe
as she silently screams,

her eyes clawing for a distraction
as they skitter from the overly colorful,
fuchsia, burgundy and scarlet,
overly cheery bouquets
in the porcelain vases

by its..
no...
his
coffin

back down to her own
exposed
toes.

The flowers on her summertime heels
make her want to vomit.
They told her heels would
be the proper attire for such a serious occasion
as this.

But tell me... how are
flowered peep-toes appropriate for an occasion
like this?

And tell me,
How do you expect the unexpected?



FRANCESCA LONGO ★ grade 11

the
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